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FEATURES OF SOCIETY
IN OLD AND IN NEW ENGLAND.
—
BY HENRY MANN.

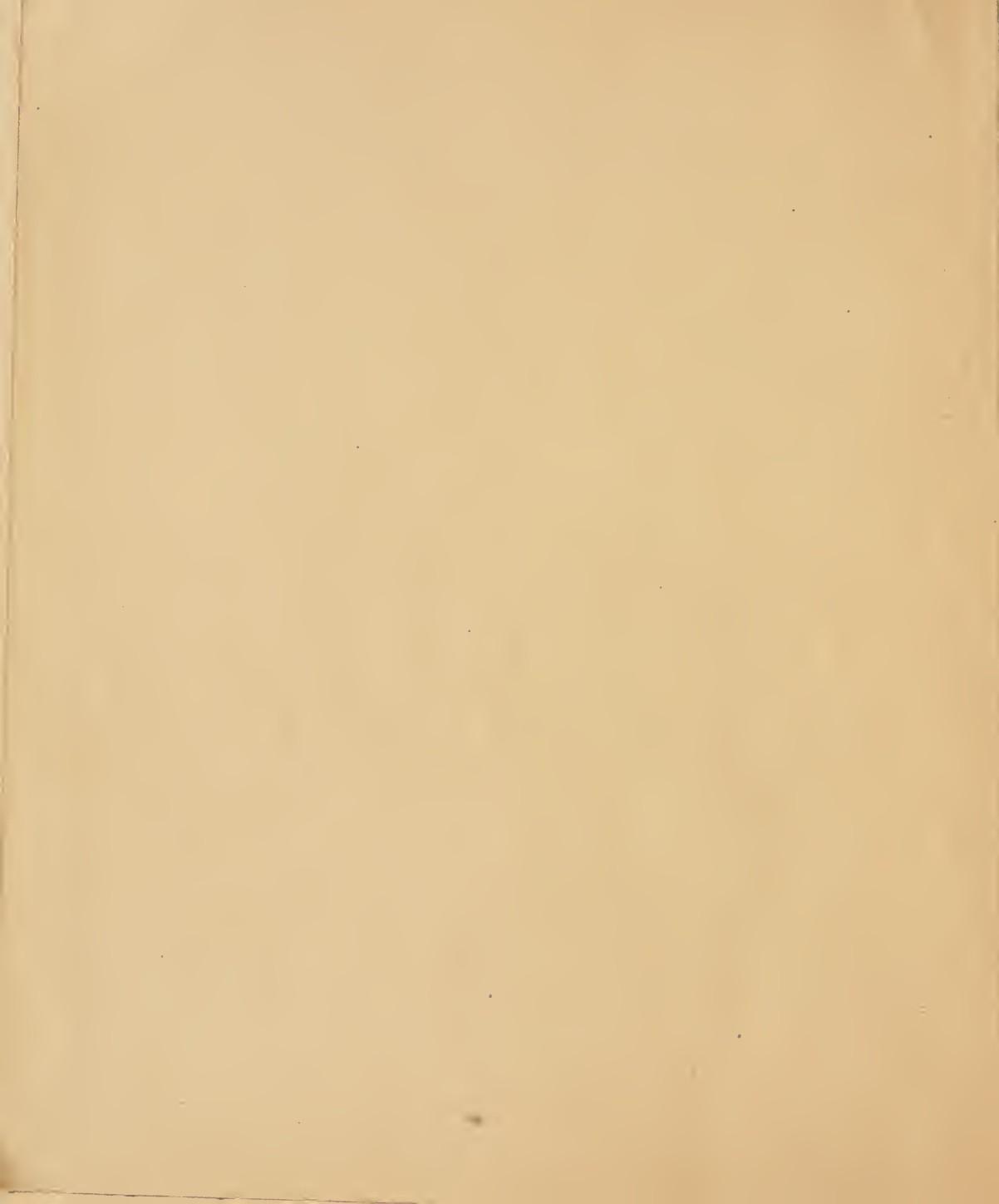
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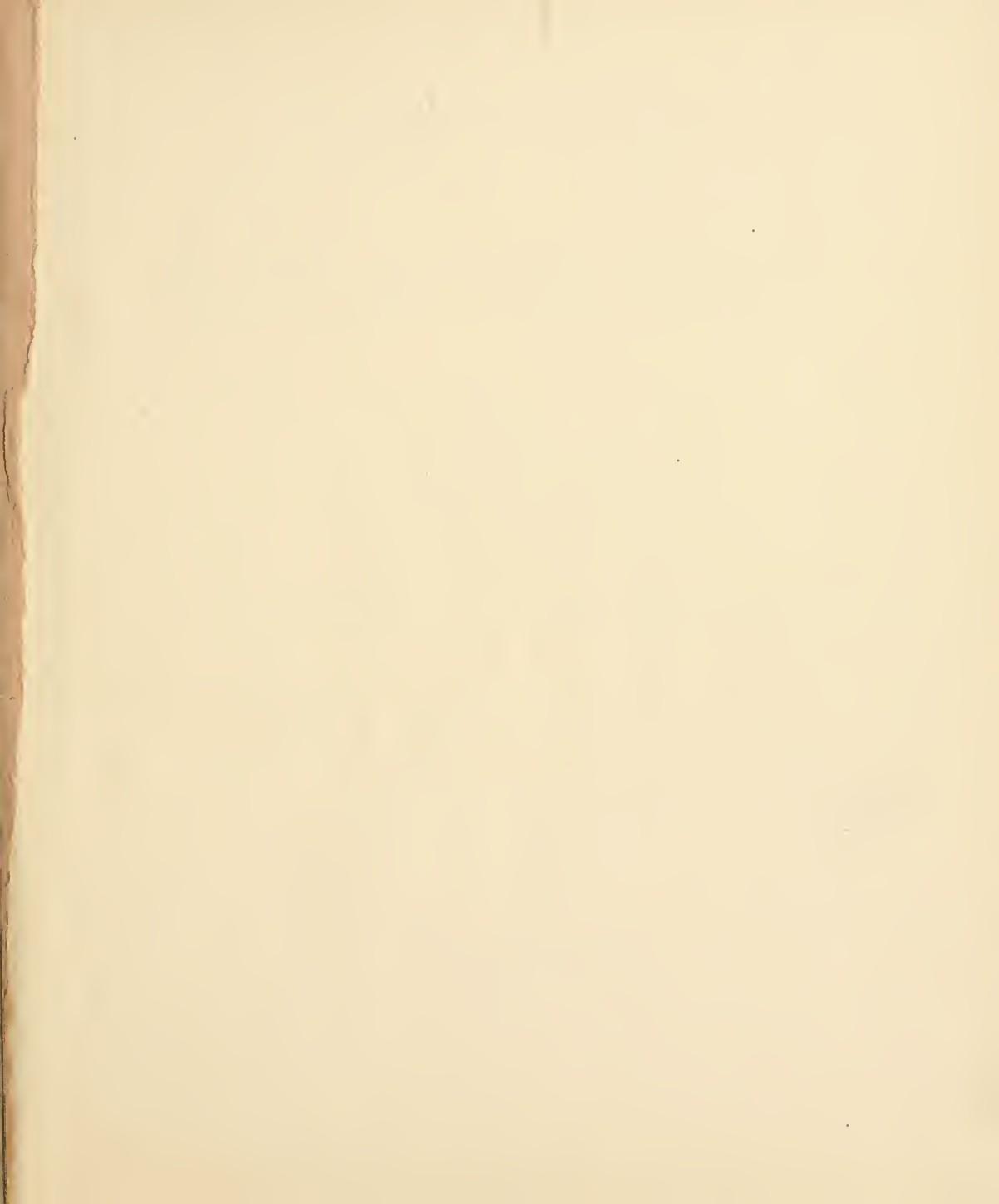
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FEATURES OF SOCIETY

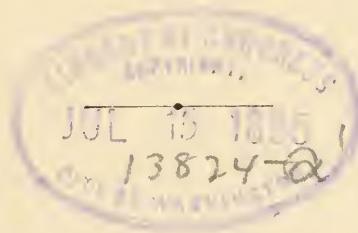
In Old and in New England.

BY

HENRY MANN,

AUTHOR OF

“ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL REPUBLICS.”



PROVIDENCE:
SIDNEY S. RIDER.
1885.

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To

MR. ALEXANDER MANN,
OF SWINDON, WILTS, ENGLAND, AND FORMERLY OF
ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND,
THESE THOUGHTS ARE INSCRIBED,

BY HIS SON,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

OF British birth and training, I began to reside in New England at an age sufficiently mature for the memories of the Old World to be enduring, while my mind was yet plastic enough to receive fair and unprejudiced impressions of the New. The following pages, therefore, so far as they apply to New England, are not the crude comments of a sojourner, or the hasty observations of a traveler. They are the fruit of thought and of experience, on the farm, in the office, in the court, in all the varied phases of life of which an employé in journalism is a witness, and often a part. The articles in reply to Mr. Mallock's work on *Property and Progress* appeared originally as editorial contributions in the columns of the Providence *Journal*.

I take the opportunity to thank the critics of the press, at home and abroad, who reviewed my former work on *Ancient and Mediæval Republics*, and I think it due to myself to add a brief explanation. The writer of the very courteous and intelligent criticism in the New York *Star* did me the honor to suggest that I had consulted Mr. Lecky's *History of European Morals*. I simply reply that I never read a line of Mr. Lecky's most interesting volumes until after my own book was in type. I make the same answer to the suggestion of the *World* in regard to Sir Henry Sumner Maine. This confession is perhaps not to my credit; but it is none the less true. Whether the ideas in *Ancient and Mediæval Republics* were valuable or poor, they were at least original; and I can say the same of this little book.

THE AUTHOR.

NORTH PROVIDENCE, R. I., May 15, A. D. 1885.

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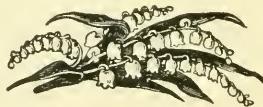
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A REPLY TO MR. MALLOCK.*

COMMUNISM can hardly be called an American question. No sentiment is more deeply implanted in the native American breast than respect for the rights of property. The leveling philosophy of Hegel, and the Utopian dreams of Bakunin find but few disciples among the descendants of the Pilgrims, and it is not difficult to account for this healthy state of public opinion. There can be no doubt here about the title of the freeholder to his estate. Here there are no abject and subordinate cultivators, with the wrongs of centuries rankling in their hearts, and with the ever-present knowledge that the earnings of their labor go to support an idle landlord

* PROPERTY AND PROGRESS, or a Brief Inquiry into Contemporary Social Agitation in England. By W. H. Mallock. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

in baronial splendor. The man who tills the soil owns the soil, and every stone which he extracts from the field, every stump which his oxen uproot, represents an addition to his personal wealth. The idea that he should share his estate with others seems to him too absurd for argument, and the advocate of such a revolution he regards as either mildly insane or wittingly dishonest. Communism can take no hold upon a people whose possessions have been acquired and developed by centuries of rugged toil, who call no man master, and whose happy mediocrity of condition induces contentment and stability, as well as a wholesome distrust of novelty. It is in this deeply implanted New England reverence for established institutions that the hope for the future of America rests. Before it the pestilential vapor of socialism, borne across the Atlantic from the squirming and steaming masses of Europe, disappears like a plague before a purifying flame, and, whatever may be the outcome of the struggle, in its various forms, now going on between the upper and lower orders in the mother continent, in the United States the found-

ations of society are likely to remain firm and unsapped.

The subject of Mr. Mallock's work may therefore be regarded as strictly foreign. In continental Europe, communism is a reality, formidable to the aged Emperor of Germany, notwithstanding his chancellor and his armies; terrible in the form of Nihilism to the Czar of Russia, not safe from its machinations in the palace or on the public street, and, it may be said, holding his life and his crown by the forbearance of the conspirators who deprived his father of both. In England, communism is an exotic; but, according to Mr. Mallock, it is taking root, and Mr. George's work, on *Progress and Poverty*, is becoming the social gospel of multitudes of the working classes. Mr. Mallock attempts to refute the theories of Mr. George with cold, analytical reasoning, and he refines to absurdity, in the crucible of accomplished criticism, the broad and brilliant assertions of the socialistic apostle. But, unfortunately for the effect of Mr. Mallock's well-rounded and euphonious periods, the fact that Mr. George's arguments may be ill-founded

and untenable does not establish a sound defence for his clients, the property-holding nobility and gentry of England. When he quotes, to prove what he calls the grotesque character of the socialistic doctrine of the inalienable right of the people to the land, the case of the island of Rum, whose three hundred inhabitants — all but twelve — were expelled in order that the island might be turned into a deer forest for an Englishman, to prove that, if the expulsion had never taken place, the inhabitants would have multiplied, in the course of years, to such an extent that the surplus would have had to emigrate, and that, therefore, the right to their native shore could not have been inalienable, he brings the more vividly to mind the atrocious manner in which British land-owners have in the past abused the right of property, which, largely in consequence of such abuse, is now questioned and assailed. “Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just,” says England's greatest poet, and the weakness of Mr. Mallock's plea is not in its ingenuity or ability so much as in the iniquity of the English tenure of land, and of the methods by which a

very large proportion of the land was acquired by the ancestors of the proprietors, and in the game laws which still debar the English workingman from the invigorating sport of the chase in the forest which adjoins his village, and from adding to his larder a rabbit or a hare, under penalty of arrest as a criminal ; and, on the other hand, the influence of the teachings of Mr. George and of Mr. Hyndman on the lower classes of the English people, is not because the latter have not the intelligence and discernment to appreciate the fallacy of the theories propounded, but because they keenly feel the injustice of the existing system, and are ready to accept the panacea of the quack, when they cannot obtain the prescription of a regular doctor. When an advocate deliberately waives, as Mr. Mallock does, the issues of fact and of equity, and bases his argument on abstract reasoning, he may convince the head, but he cannot the heart, of the judicial tribunal of the world's opinion, and in the mighty impulses which guide the destiny of nations, the heart is above the head.

Mr. Mallock shows wisdom in recognizing the strength of the enemy, because, as he states, “since action in modern politics so largely depends on the people, the mildest errors are grave, if they are only sufficiently popular. For practical purposes no proposals are ridiculous unless they are ridiculous to the mass of those who act upon them; in any question in which the people are powerful, no fallacy is refuted, if the people still believe in it,” and Mr. Mallock admits the widespread and spreading popularity of Mr. George’s proposal for the confiscation of landed estates. He first takes up Mr. George’s proposition that “the laboring class creates its own wages as it receives them; it being wholly false that wages are drawn from capital.” This proposition hardly needs the elaborate and finical refutation which Mr. Mallock devotes to it. It is evident that in New England, for instance, the capital of the manufacturer is invested in his factory of cotton or wool, the machinery which it contains, and the material with which to begin manufacture. The skill and labor of the operatives convert that material into an article for

sale, and the money received for it comes back to pay the wages of the operatives, the other running expenses, and, if anything is left over, the profits of the manufacturer on his invested capital. It is not, therefore, wholly false, as Mr. George asserts, that wages are drawn from capital; for, while the laboring class by its own labor creates its own wages as it receives them, it does so with the aid of capital, in the form of the tools with which the wage-producing material is manufactured. It is true that the village blacksmith, making his own horse-shoes with iron bought with his own money, and receiving into his hands the price of his labor, creates his own earnings as he receives them, and to him Mr. George's proposition would correctly apply; but it would not apply to the great multitude of workers, employed in aggregated masses in the manufacturing establishments of New and Old England. Labor is the vitalizing principle; without it, capital would be inert and non-productive: but without capital, also, the labor and skill of the vast majority of men and women who depend for their bread and

clothing on wages to be earned, would be equally non-productive.

The next proposition, that “population does not increase faster than do the means of subsistence, and thus the current explanations of poverty are no explanations at all,” is the more plausible because it is partly true. It is true that a few colonists starting in a new country would not be able to produce the same proportion of the necessaries of life for their subsistence that their more numerous descendants, with increased facilities and diversity of industry and of commerce, would be able to obtain and enjoy. The history of all colonial enterprises goes to prove this. It is also true, as Mr. George avers, that “while all through the vegetable and animal kingdoms the limit of subsistence is independent of the thing subsisted, with man the limit of subsistence is, within the final limits of earth, air, water, and sunshine, dependent upon man himself,” but it is not true that as men multiply they widen, *pari passu*, the limits of their subsistence, and will continue to do so until every mile of the earth is peopled. Mr. Mallock

points out that it by no means follows, because the limits of subsistence are elastic, that very great pressure may not be required to stretch them; but he fails to point out the also evident fact that with the majority of mankind, as in India and China, the tendency of the people is not to press beyond the bounds within which comfortable subsistence has ceased to be possible, but to remain and grovel upon the soil which hardly yields them a daily morsel, and where frequent famines, claiming victims by the thousands, and sometimes by millions, attest the inadequacy of nature to provide for the wants of the children of earth. Where population has spread, it has ordinarily been attributable to other causes than a seeking for mere subsistence. The pilgrim could have lived in England, the Huguenot in France, the Spaniard and Portuguese in their native peninsula, had their remaining been only a question of food, but religious belief compelled the former, as a thirst for riches impelled the latter, to seek in strange lands that which they could not enjoy at home. Indeed, the history of civilization nowhere contains a record of the ex-

pulsion or emigration of any large body of people on account of inability to obtain enough to eat in the country of their origin, while among the barbarous tribes in the period of the Roman republic and empire, before capital and private proprietorship of land were known to the ancestors of English-speaking races, such emigrations were frequent, and sometimes resulted in the destruction of the emigrants by the inhabitants of the more fortunate countries invaded by the savage communists, and sometimes in victory for the invaders, whereupon the communists from the forests soon developed into landed proprietors, as jealous of their rights and privileges as the people whom they had conquered.

Mr. Mallock, in endeavoring to show the fallacious character of Mr. George's implied assertion that want cannot be caused by the pressure of population, appears to err as much on one side as Mr. George on the other. He says :

“ Of all other countries, England and America are, perhaps, the two which are now most closely connected ; but the connection was not established without infinite pain and effort, and

it costs constant effort every day to maintain it. All we need here speak of is the question of the American food supply. This reaches England only through the most complex and delicate machinery, which was slow in construction, which is easy to derange, which it is possible to ruin, and which it is difficult to add to. England only gets from America because it gives to America, and what it gets depends, not on what America grows, but on what Americans desire of the things that England makes. Thus, so far as Englishmen subsist on the produce of American corn-fields, it is not the extent of the corn-fields that forms the limit of this existence, but the wants and the tastes of the Americans, as related to England's powers of supplying them. Now, such wants and tastes are of all things the most liable to vary. There may be a point beyond which they cannot shrink, as there is certainly a point beyond which they cannot expand; but though they may never entirely disappear, yet any day they might dwindle, and did they dwindle, what would happen is obvious. The limits of subsistence for England would be

suddenly narrowed, and the population of England would at once be pressing against them."

All of which may be agreed to, with the qualification that, but for the reservation of large tracts of land from cultivation and from cattle-raising in northern as well as southern Britain, and but for the laws which prevent the soil from being cut up, as in France, into numerous small proprietorships, the population of the British Isles would be, if not independent as to food supply, at least very near to independence, and would not be in peril of "pressing against the limits of subsistence" upon every mutation of taste or tariff in America.

And this brings us to the most important of Mr. George's propositions, and Mr. Mallock's form of refuting it—that private property in land causes poverty, and that therefore the land should be confiscated for the public benefit by taxation that would leave to the nominal proprietor only a sufficient amount to compensate him as an agent of the state, in the collection of rents for the state. As I have indicated in my introductory remarks, it is difficult for an

American to appreciate the force with which this proposition presents itself to the minds of the English working classes, for the reason that the conditions here and there are so different. Here ownership is almost uniformly coupled with occupation, and, in the rural districts, with cultivation; there it is not. The owner receives and enjoys, and expends but little in proportion in the locality from whence he draws his income. Absentee landlordism is not confined to Ireland, and not infrequently an English squire has owed his defeat for Parliament to his neglect of the local tradesmen. The sweeping evictions in Scotland, immortalized in the pathetic strains of “Lochaber no more,” have left a brand upon the popular memory that ages will not efface, while the existence of almost impassable barriers between title and wealth on the one side, and respectable labor on the other, causes an irritation which is growing more inflammatory with years. Not that the English workingman is disloyal to his country or his sovereign, but he can see no reason why the space between the throne and the people should be filled with an aristocracy,

with coronets and titles, and vested privileges, and extensive landed possessions, instead of, as in America, the higher positions in life being occupied by men who have earned their promotion by their toil, by their energy and by their exceptional ability. It is not strange, therefore, that Mr. George's assaults upon property, which seem to us here so absurd as to be unworthy of refutation, are regarded as dangerous by one of the most accomplished of critics, and that the valuable pages of the *Quarterly Review* are devoted to his reply. Mr. Mallock demonstrates very clearly that Mr. George's scheme to make the landlords middlemen for the state, by taxing them up to, or nearly up to, the rentable value of their estates, would not benefit the general public, for the state would simply take the place of the landlord, and, it may be added, would probably be more severe in the collection of rents, for it is admitted in a quotation by Mr. George himself from Miss C. G. O'Brien's article on "The Irish Land Question" in the *Nineteenth Century*, that "an aristocracy, such as that of Ireland, has its virtues as well as its

vices, and is influenced by sentiments which do not enter into mere business transactions—sentiments which must often modify and soften the calculations of cold self-interest." The same may be said of the English aristocracy, and while there may be instances of harshness and oppression, the tenant of the English land-owner is doubtless more pleasantly situated than he would be as tenant of the soulless and inexorable state. Besides, it is impossible to see how the poor would be helped by such a change of tenure; for, as Mr. George proposes that the property should be let to the highest bidder, the man without a shilling, or a hundred shillings, would be as much shut out from competition as he is to-day.

II.

FROM ABSTRACT REASONING TO FACTS.

WHEN Mr. Mallock leaves the domain of abstract and speculative reasoning in his confutation of Mr. George to try issues of fact with Mr. Hyndman, he appears at once at a serious disadvantage, for it is manifest that he is either ignorant of the subject with which he is dealing, or presumes ignorance in his readers, and deliberately endeavors to deceive them. Mr. Mallock quotes from the *New Domesday Book* to prove that the agricultural soil of Great Britain is not practically owned by 30,000 persons, as Mr. Hyndman asserts, and to show that "the classes of smaller land-owners are not far off from a million." We will give his own words and figures: "The landed aristocracy, all told," he says, "number about five thousand. Just below them come 4,800 owners with estates that average

700 acres; then come 32,000, with estates that average 300 acres; then come 32,000, with estates that average 200 acres; then 25,000, with estates that average seventy acres; and then 72,000 with estates that average forty acres, the total number of the smaller rural proprietors being thus not less than 133,000. Finally, there come the urban and suburban proprietors—the latter with their four acres, the former with their fourth of an acre—and the number of these is 820,000." Now, in this list of proprietors no distinction is drawn between copy-holders and free-holders, or between these and lease-holders, and any one acquainted with the conditions on which English urban and suburban property is usually held, cannot doubt that the large majority of possessors are not free-holders, or owners in the real sense, but lease-holders, the fee remaining in the landlord. Again, it has been demonstrated that the *New Domesday Book* is untrustworthy in other important statements. An extent of 2,781,063 acres, a very large proportion belonging, it is reasonably certain, to great land-owners, is not included in its tables,

while the whole metropolis, with its enormous rentals and vast estates, is also excluded. Again, church lands are entered as the property of individuals in occupancy, and the names of large land-owners are multiplied according to the counties in which they happen to own property, the 525 members of the peerage standing, according to Mr. Arthur Arnold, for upwards of 1,500 owners. Making due allowance for these errors, the Hon. George C. Brodrick, in his work on *English Land and English Landlords*, estimates that "not more than 4,000 persons, and probably considerably less than 4,000 persons, owning estates of 1,000 acres and upwards, possess in the aggregate an extent of nearly 19,000,000 acres, or about four-sevenths of the whole area included in the *Domesday Book* returns. If we now subtract the owners of between 1,000 and 2,000 acres, who ostensibly number 2,719, and must really number as much as 1,750, we find that a landed aristocracy consisting of about 2,250 persons own together nearly half the enclosed land in England and Wales."

On turning to the county tables compiled by Mr. Brodrick, we find in still more striking form the evidence of oligarchical control of the greater part of the agricultural soil of England. Beginning alphabetically, we learn that in Bedford, three peers own 53,789 acres, and fourteen great land-owners own 60,127 acres, while 1825 small proprietors own but 38,906 acres, and 5,302 cottagers (most of them probably lease-holders) possess 824 acres. It will be seen that the three peers own about 14,000 acres more than the 7,127 small proprietors and cottagers. In Derby, six peers own nearly double the amount of land really or nominally owned by 6,017 small proprietors and 12,874 cottagers; and in Dorset, ten peers own more than three times the amount of land owned by 2,794 small proprietors and 7,694 cottagers. In the whole of England and Wales, 400 peers and peeresses own 5,728,979 acres, 1,288 great land-owners, 8,497,699 acres, and 217,049 small proprietors own 3,931,806 acres, and 703,289 cottagers, 151,148 acres. These are dry figures, but they are from an author who compiled them with equal industry, care, and in-

telligence, both from government statistics and from information collected by direct inquiry among the land-owners themselves ; an author who cannot be called a “smatterer,” as Mr. Mallock terms Hyndman and Marx, but who has gone to the very root of the subject, and who, so far from being inclined to communism, speaks and evidently feels a conservative interest in the maintenance of British institutions, as far as may be consistent with the welfare and continued prosperity of the people of Great Britain ; and, in view of these figures, and of facts and circumstances which must be apparent to every Englishman with his eyes wide open to his surroundings, it may not be offensive to say that Mr. Mallock sinks to the level of “a smatterer,” when he quotes the *Domesday Book* as authority that the major part of the soil of England is not controlled by a few thousand aristocratic families, to whom the toil and enterprise of nearly thirty millions of people, directly or indirectly, pays a vast and accumulating tribute.

So far we have been dealing with Mr. Hyndman’s loose and essentially truthful averment in

regard to the number of land-owners, and Mr. Mallock's seemingly well-grounded but really illusive refutation of it. Now, let us take up Mr. Mallock's next assertion, that the aristocracy receive not so much as one-third of the gross rental of England, which he states to be about £99,000,000. In order to arrive at this conclusion he conveniently cuts off from the aristocratic classes all whose estates average less than one thousand acres, although the prefix of "reverend" to the names of many of these shows that a large proportion of the class are clergymen, most of them presumably of the Established Church, and undoubtedly connected by blood, position, and education with the aristocracy, while many others are the wealthy owners of valuable tracts, covered with buildings, in towns and cities. These latter may not be reckoned among large land-owners, in the extent of their territories, but if of gentle descent, they may fairly claim to belong to the aristocracy. Mr. Mallock's arbitrary bound would also exclude not a few who are prominent in the highest circles of society, while scores of the country squires, the typical

landed gentry of England, would hardly more than be within the limit, for the average in many of the English counties is but little over one thousand acres to a squire ; in Anglesea, for instance, six squires having 10,200 acres, in Middlesex five squires having 8,500 acres, and in York, W. R., one hundred and one squires having 171,700 acres.

It should be added that there are very important and desirable advantages connected with the ownership of land, besides the pecuniary. The squire of the village is a prince in his domain, and the coronet of the land-owning peer is far from being an emblem of obsolete sovereignty. Feudal services, it is true, have for centuries been abolished ; but the whole administration of a country parish, reformed and liberalized as it may seem to be, is within the control of the usually pleasant, good-natured and fairly well-educated gentleman who owns the soil, who sits as a magistrate to try local offenders, as the lord of the manor did of old, and whose tenantry cast their votes at his beck, as they formerly drew the sword at that of his ancestor. Even in the towns

which are centres of skillful industry, and where hundreds or thousands of intelligent mechanics are able to partially counterbalance the influence of the rural proprietors, the land-owners manage to maintain, in a paramount degree, their inherited superiority ; for, in the majority of such boroughs the issue, as to political representation, becomes one between the squire who calls himself a Conservative, and is called a Tory, and the equally aristocratic squire, in an opposite parish, who calls himself a Liberal, and is nothing but a Whig. The Liberal leaders hold forth the Whig squire as the champion of popular rights, and as there is no choice except between him and the avowed Tory, the workingmen give the former their support. And yet the English working classes feel an instinctive antipathy toward the whole landed gentry, while this feeling is reciprocated by the gentry, and finds expression not in open utterance, but indirectly ; for instance, in the greater severity with which petty offenders of the artisan class are treated by the esquire magistracy, as compared with the patriarchal leniency extended toward the agricultural tenant or laborer.

This antipathy is doubtless at the bottom of the occasional agitation in some of the lesser towns, where there is a numerous population of mechanics, in favor of a paid local magistracy, in place of the bench of squires.

To return to Mr. Mallock's work : That gentleman, after his endeavor to convince us that England is not owned by the class who exercise the right of landlords over most that is worth owning, goes on to defend the institution of monarchy against the charge of extravagant cost. The British throne does not need the championship of Mr. Mallock. Among the mass of the people of Great Britain who earn their living with their sinews and their brains, there is as deep loyalty toward the monarchy as among the aristocracy of title and privilege, and a loyalty all the purer and more valuable because it is unselfish. The throne existed before the aristocracy ; in centuries past, as in the present century, in the passage of the reform bill, it has made common cause with the people against the aristocracy, and it can and will survive the abolition of the special privileges which, in ages gone by,

have been grossly abused, and which have become so odious to the sentiments of the millions, and so grotesque a mockery of the common rights of mankind that, in some particulars, they dare not be maintained otherwise than in name. Mr. Mallock estimates the cost of the crown to be about seven millions of dollars annually, certainly not a large amount for the support of what he truly denotes “the most splendid and revered monarchy of which the world can boast,” and, he might have added, only about one-fortieth the amount which the land-owning aristocracy collects from the toilers and producers of England, without giving back anything in return, or performing any function save that of luxurious existence.

It seems unnecessary to follow Mr. Mallock in his evidence that there are men in mercantile life in England who have incomes as large as those of the leading land-owners, there being sixty-six incomes derived from land of over £50,000, and seventy-seven from business, and of incomes between £10,000 and £50,000, from land 800, and from business 910. So far from

these figures showing, as Mr. Mallock thinks they do, the comparative inferiority of the great land-owners as factors in the realm, to the unprejudiced observer the only surprise is that the proportion in favor of trade and commerce is so comparatively small in a country so limited in area as England, whose cities are the workshops of the world, and whose vessels furrow every sea. It appears that with all the commercial and manufacturing enterprise of the English people, the great land-owners still rival, or nearly rival, in point of income, the leading merchants and manufacturers, who, for every pound they receive, give a bounding impulse to that business which is the life-blood of the nation, and which furnishes employment for the multitude, whose labor and skill are the basis of England's prosperity and glory.

Mr. Mallock, while pointing out the errors of socialistic agitators, says that he does not contend that the existing land system is perfect, and does not deny or admit that, as time goes on, many changes may be needed. This, however, is the only real question at issue, and without it

there would be no occasion for the controversy which has given Mr. Mallock the pretext for writing his book. George, Hyndman, Marx, and other advocates of nationalization or division of land, may, and doubtless do, err in some of their statements of pretended facts, as well as in their reasoning. But the existing land system cannot stand or fall upon their errors, and if Mr. Mallock desired that his writings should influence public opinion, he should have attempted to prove not only that George and the others were wrong, but also that the system they assailed was right. To the radical allegation, general in its terms, but sustained by ample historical evidence, that the rapacity of landlords has appropriated the common lands which the people once possessed, it is no defence to say that "if the land were distributed amongst even one-half of our existing population, not only would no common land be restored, but every acre would have to be taken of such common land as is left," or that "were one-half of the population allotted land in plats of not more than ten acres to a family, all the land in England

would be occupied, and half the population would be utterly landless still." This does not disprove the facts that previous to the eleventh century vast tracts of land, afterward appropriated and disposed of by the sovereign as his own, did belong to the people, that the common lands which remained were gradually enclosed by the nobles and gentry, more especially in the time of the Tudors, although in 1549 the people in the eastern counties rose in insurrection against the wrong, and that this enclosing was not always, or perhaps generally, with a view of increasing the landlord's rental, but in order that parks might be stocked with useless wild animals.

It is safe to say, however, that there is no desire on the part of the working classes of England to compel the landlords to give up their lands, no matter how unjustly the title to the soil was originally acquired, and if there is an apparent sympathy with the impracticable doctrines of socialism, it is because Parliament is slow to effect a reform in a legitimate way, in accord with the tendency of enlightened civilization, by

the abolition of primogeniture, and of entail, as practically secured in ordinary settlements of landed property, or in the wills of landed proprietors, and through which great estates are handed down from generation to generation intact. In the United States, where the right of the testator to dispose of his property is retained, but the equal rights of children recognized in case of intestacy, the results have been satisfactory alike to individuals and to the community, and any suggestion of return to primogeniture would not receive a hearing. The practical effect has been to prevent the perpetuation of large estates, without invading or infringing upon the rights of property, and, as law sanctifies custom, it would now be regarded as unjust for a parent to ignore, without cause, the claim of a child to a fair share of the parental property, and wills are seldom made in violation of what most people believe to be a natural duty; while in England, on the other hand, primogeniture, sanctioned by law, is recognized also by custom. The abolition of primogeniture in England would not be accompanied by hardship, for it would be simply

a declaration by the law-making body that that which every man now has the right to do—namely, to devise his real property in equal shares—shall be done, if he should not choose to make a will to the contrary. Dealing with family settlements and the law of entail would be another and a difficult matter, involving the rights of children unborn and various rights and interests of persons living, dependent upon expectant estates. But the abolition of primogeniture would be a long step toward the leveling of the landed aristocracy, and would have a more effective influence in silencing the clamor of socialism, which may yet become menacing, than any quantity of subtle and technical argument. Other reforms would be adopted in due time, with the deliberation and caution characteristic of the English race.

The improved and improving condition of the middle and working classes, and the increase of the number who have an interest in the soil, affords no security against agitation. While there have been instances of revolt under the pressure of desperate circumstances, as of the gladiators and

of the Jacquerie, yet great movements in behalf of popular rights have usually reached their most formidable proportions when the people have learned in the leisure of comfort to feel their power and to measure their deserts. Wat Tyler's insurrection was an uprising of men who were free, and who meant to maintain the liberties whose sweetness they had learned and of which the nobility would fain have deprived them. The people of England were in the enjoyment of greater liberty when Parliament made war upon Charles I. than when their fathers had quietly submitted to the iron grasp of the Tudors, and it was a nation determined to assert the rights it possessed that drove the second James into exile. England had endured years of greater want than those which witnessed the fiercest agitation for the unrestricted importation of food, and the fires which gave lurid warning that the will of the electors must be obeyed by the lords in the passage of the reform bill, were not kindled by starving men. If the working classes are as well-to-do as Mr. Mallock's somewhat indefinite figures are intended to show, it is

not in consequence of, but in spite of the land system and its drones, and the greater the accumulations of their industry the more impatient they will become of acknowledging as superiors and as rulers, men and families who affect to despise the toilers beneath them, and who, by virtue of descent from some male favorite or female harlot of a king, enjoy unnatural exemption from the more weighty anxieties and burdens which Divine Providence has allotted to be borne by mankind.

ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN NEW ENGLAND.

IN the Old World meaning of the term there are no classes of society in New England; there is no condition of life, however low, from which a man may not aspire and rise to the highest honors and the most enviable distinction, provided that he has the requisite natural endowments, favorable opportunities, and the ability and foresight to grasp them. It is mere buncombe to assert, as some do, that there is anything like a ruling or privileged class; while it cannot be pretended that in New England—as in New York—citizens of character and wealth stand aloof from political strife. Here the office of governor is considered the crown of a successful business career, and the governor is the chief of society, as well as of the administration. His official trust, instead of being profitable, entails a generous expenditure from his private purse, for he is expected to maintain the reputation of the state for hospital-

ity, while every plausible charity appeals to his open hand. His reward is in being the first citizen during his one year or more of executive service, and to be called Governor as long as he may live. Of course, whatever a man's origin, none but the rich could uphold the dignity of the office, and therefore no poor man is ever seriously put forward as a candidate. The members of the General Assembly are also men of good social position and usually of independent estate in their respective localities, except where the foreign-born vote is in a majority. The difference between the New England system and the English is that the members of Parliament — even of the House of Commons — belong, almost without exception, either to the nobility or the gentry, and were born to wealth and aristocratic station ; here the people's representatives, while generally men of property, have, almost without exception, toiled their way up to independence and influence from straitened and humble beginnings.

But while there are no definite class lines in New England, there are certain broad bound-

aries, tacitly recognized by all, and apparent to a superficial observer. The native Americans, descended from the original settlers, and removed by fortune above the struggle for bread, evidently believe themselves to be a superior race, and affect to regard with ill-concealed aversion the immigrants from abroad, and more especially the Irish.* Nor is this strange when one considers how wholly different the Irish immigrants are, in religion, prejudices, habits, and ideas of morality and respectability from the native population. For instance, the native New Englander is not, as a rule, unfriendly to old England; the Irishman detests England; the

* It is an interesting fact that the early Puritans held even a stronger aversion toward the Irish than New Englanders of the present day. As early as 1654 a committee of the General Court of Massachusetts, charged with the consideration of many "evills growing amongst vs," recommended as follows:

"10. This court considering *ye cruel and malignant spirrit yt have ffrom tyme to tyme byn manifest in ye Irish Nation, against ye English Nation, doe hereby declare thyr phibition of any Irish men, women or children being brought Into this Iurisdiction* on the penalty of fifty pounds starling to each Inhabitant yt shall buy of any marchant ship mr or other agent any such pson or pscons soe Transported by ym wch fine shall bee by the Countrys Marshall on Conviction of sum Magistrate or Court leavied and bee to the vse of ye Informer one third and two thirds to ye country. This act to be In force six months after publication of this order."

natives are nearly all of the Protestant communion; the Irish of the Roman Catholic; the Protestant churches exclude from membership persons conducting the liquor traffic, which the Catholic Church appears to look upon as no hindrance to Christian fellowship; the Irish oppose the public schools, which Americans cherish as the block-house of their liberties; the Irish commonly belong to the Democratic party, while the majority of natives adhere to the Republican. Besides, comparatively few of the Irish are skilled workingmen, and skill and capital are prone to look down on sinews and a spade. The depth of the antipathy on the part of native Americans toward the Irish might seem incredible to one not in frequent and confidential association with natives; it is deep and harsh, though, for motives of discretion, it is seldom expressed in public. Nevertheless, an Irish-American willing to identify himself with Americans, their traditions and their interests, and to discard the peculiarities which nettle the patriotism and provoke the antagonism of the native population, would not find the accident of birth a serious obstacle in the ascending path.

Kindred origin and identity of religion are manifestly the chief points in favor of the English immigrant in New England, while another and perhaps material circumstance is that English residents very seldom interfere in politics; many of them, indeed, adhere to their native allegiance, and do not become citizens. Immense manufacturing interests and large estates are controlled by British subjects who spend much of their time abroad. These, of course, when in New England, move in society befitting their wealth and their reputation. The mass of English immigrants are mill operatives, and more skillful in the higher grades of factory labor than any other nationality. They exhibit here the virtues and the faults which predominate in any English factory town, modified to a greater or less extent by their surroundings, and especially by the stringent ordinances in relation to the sale of intoxicating liquors. In the New England view the obnoxious and exotic feature of the English workingman's character is the disposition to combine in labor unions and strikes. In Massachusetts, where the suffrage is liberal, and

many of the mill operatives are voters, the legislature has been induced to enact laws, similar to those in force in England, limiting the hours of factory labor, and making various provisions for the protection of persons engaged in that industry; but in Rhode Island, where the franchise is restricted, hours of labor are unlimited, and there is no labor bureau to excite discontent between employer and employé by the compilation of troublesome facts, and the suggestion of hampering reforms. Not only the manufacturers, but nearly all the property-owning class, have been inclined to look upon the labor agitator as a public nuisance, to be suppressed in any legitimate manner, and a really able and liberal minded governor, of excellent social position, and extensively engaged in the manufacturing business, who dared to recommend, in an annual message, factory legislation after the pattern adopted by the British Parliament, has never since commanded political confidence or support. His recommendations were reported to a committee which quietly ignored them, the newspapers noticed the matter in brief and sar-

castic language, and such was the end of it for a time. That gentleman was ten years ahead of public sentiment. The voice of humanity has nearly convinced the judgment of the lawmakers, and a ten-hour provision for women and children cannot long be delayed. Apart from the proneness to labor agitation, the English operatives in our factories are a most valuable element of the community, and New England can never repay the debt that she owes to their energy and to their skill. Englishmen who arrived within the present century, poor and friendless, became the founders of prominent manufacturing houses, and their children are counted among the leading families. If English manufacturers have found a powerful rival in the United States, they owe the fact as much to their own countrymen as to Americans. Nor has the day for such Englishmen gone by.

Although New Englanders are fully conscious of and appreciate all that Englishmen have done for New England's industrial advancement, yet it would be idle to pretend that the quills of nativism do not stand up, to some extent, against

citizens of English, as well as of Irish origin. That the prejudice against residents of foreign birth includes settlers from England, I have been assured by English residents of old and respectable situation, and my individual observation has led to the same opinion. The native antipathy is more marked in the country towns than in the cities and other centres. Among the elders it is strong, and is, I think, a rankling remnant of the passion aroused by the Revolution and the war of 1812. The writer remembers having heard of a grim farmer who, when a worthy young Englishman visited his daughter with matrimonial intentions, enlivened the courtship by chasing his would-be son-in-law, to whom birth was the only objection, across lots with an axe. The young man, not being a Lochinvar, did not care to risk his life for his love, much to the detriment of the daughter, who subsequently eloped with a miserable tramp fortunate enough to have first seen the light of the sun on this side of the Atlantic. The dislike of Englishmen is, however, dying out with the old folks. The rising generation, especially the girls, are

quite willing to receive on equal terms the newcomer from Great Britain whose education and habits are up to the American standard.

In fundamentals of character the Scotchman — perhaps I ought to say the Lowland Scotchman — is closely akin to the Yankee. His native land, like New England, yields but a grudging return to rustic toil, and accumulated wealth there, as here, is the reward of the shrewdest foresight and indefatigable enterprise — the foresight which saw that a fordable stream might be converted into a great commercial highway, the tireless energy and public spirit to accomplish the gigantic work. The knotty individuality of the Scotchman is respected by the native American, who is fully conscious of his own, while the heroic history and the touching melodies of the race of Bruce and of Burns are a part of a polite New England education. The successful Scotchman, therefore, readily obtains social recognition and welcome.

As for other nationalities, the Germans are not yet sufficiently numerous to exercise an appreciable influence, although a number of promi-

nent and respected men in the professions and in business are of German origin. The social customs of the Germans form an obstacle in the way of harmony with the native population. The Germans regard Sunday as a day for recreation and enjoyment, whereas the New England idea is that of a day of abstinence, not only from labor but also from amusement, and the laws which protect the observance of the Sabbath, though modified in rigor, are by no means dead letters. A century ago it was the stocks ; to-day it is fine and imprisonment. In Ohio, Iowa, and other Western States settled from New England, the Germans have already come into conflict with the natives on the Sabbath and the sumptuary issues, and even in liberal New York the Puritanical leaven is strong enough to maintain, and recently to have added to, the severity with which violations of reverence for the consecrated day of rest and of worship may be punished. In this section, as I have said, Germans are comparatively few, and Puritanism still dominates the community, without serious question or opposition.

The French-Canadians are numerous in the factory towns, but they are birds of passage, and seldom acquire a permanent settlement. Having earned a sufficient sum of money, they go back to their Canadian homes, to return when necessity again appeals for replenishment of the purse. They have been called, somewhat unjustly, the Chinese of the East, because of their migratory habits, and because they receive lower wages than the more intelligent and skillful English operatives. But the imputation is unjust, for the French-Canadians possess useful and estimable qualities which would render them a desirable acquisition to the permanent population.

The negro in New England is a waiter and a hobby. He never has been, and is not to-day, regarded as the social or political equal of the white. There are educated and wealthy negroes in New England, yet no social club would entertain for a moment the idea of admitting one of them to membership; while until a very recent date, there never has been a negro member of any New England legislature. The old and

aristocratic families have their colored coachmen and servants, just as their ancestors had their colored slaves, and while they would not deny to the man of color the right to vote, they would smile at the suggestion that he ought to be admitted to their drawing-rooms, or be elected to the General Assembly. The feeling toward the negro is not a prejudice; it is a settled belief that he is an inferior and servile being—a belief quite compatible apparently with the most uncompromising advocacy of the rights of mankind; for the loudest pleaders for the protection of the colored man against tissue ballots and shot-guns in the South are the first to sneer and affect surprise at any request on the part of the blacks for substantial recognition in the North. The New Englander thoroughly believes in a white man's government—for himself; and there is ground for suspicion that the strenuous support by the political representatives of New England of negro domination and anarchy in the Southern States has been inspired rather by a selfish desire to see that section of the Union crippled

by misrule, and thereby prevented from becoming a rival of New England in industry and in national influence, than by any sentimental purpose to vindicate the equality of a race, the New England measure of whose capacity for public affairs is indicated by appointments to such offices as lamp-lighter and country constable.

The degree of liberality toward the colored man varies in different commonwealths. Rhode Island, where slavery lingered longest, is the least liberal. But a few years have elapsed since the law prohibiting the intermarriage of whites and colored persons was repealed, though it had long been obsolete on account of the impossibility of proving an alleged offender to be white, the only effect of the enactment having been to throw doubts upon the legitimacy of the offspring of mixed unions. The statute was erased, and by a close vote, but the repeal did not change public opinion, and some weeks later, when a white youth of respectable family married a black woman, he was haled before a magistrate, and sentenced to the Reform School during his minority, while his dusky bride stood

by weeping, less sympathy being extended to her than if she had been a cow, mooing for a calf taken from her stall to the shambles. Again, notwithstanding the Civil Rights Act of the late Senator Sumner, a colored lawyer was recently excluded from a place of public amusement, while it is well known that certain prominent hotels are full when a negro applies for accommodation. It is also well known, though perhaps hardly pertinent to the subject, that colored men are practically excluded from the Masonic order, which in New England is very flourishing, and embraces within its ranks a very large share of the respectability, wealth, and culture of the community. It is true that colored men have Masonic lodges of their own, but no official recognition is extended to them, in Rhode Island at least.

An unprejudiced observer cannot avoid the impression that the New England estimate of the colored population is justified by experience and evidence. The tone of morality is lower, as a rule, among the blacks than among the whites, there is apparent the disposition to *laissez faire*

characteristic of races of tropical origin, and the occasional attempt to imitate the manners and polish of gentlemen seldom rises above a ludicrous mimicry. The pastor of the leading colored church in Providence was deposed for telling his flock unpleasant truth about the neglect of soap and water, and urging them to aim for something higher in this world than to clean boots and drive coaches, but his removal has not made his admonitions any the less sound or wise. The larger number of colored residents cluster together in streets which bear an unsavory reputation. Lewdness is a prevailing vice, and is fostered by promiscuous gatherings for dancing, which last far into the morning, while petty gambling, in the purchase of cheap lottery tickets, is almost universal. Gross superstitions, undoubtedly remnants of the barbarous fetichism of Africa, have a strong hold upon many of the blacks, and their idea of Christianity is passionate and sensual. They interpret the Bible literally, and to them the golden gates and jasper walls of the New Jerusalem are not a figure, but a reality of the future paradise which rises be-

fore their ecstasied vision. The persons of mixed blood are usually more intelligent than the blacks, but the latter, being in the majority, keep their lighter brethren in the background, and most of the important positions, clerical and lay, in religious and other societies, are occupied by men of unmistakable African origin.

Such are some of the materials of which New England's population is composed—materials various in origin and diverse in their ideas, their creeds, and their aims, but nevertheless full of vital force and energy, and with a less percentage of human weeds and refuse than in any other country on the globe. Nearly everybody is at work, from the manufacturer worth millions, to the tramp who earns his breakfast in the charity wood-yard. It is disreputable for any one in vigorous years and health, and even when of ample fortune, to be without employment, and for this reason rich young men frequently go through the form of admission to the bar, or of medical graduation, in order that it may not be said that they are unoccupied. The sons of wealth who ignore the industrious exam-

ple of their sires are still too few in proportion to the multitude, and held in too general contempt, to do more than irritate the social surface. The aristocracy of New England is an aristocracy of workingmen — workingmen whose possessions are valued by the hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars, but still men who work.

But hardly as men toil for money here, gold is not alone a key to select associations. A man must be something besides rich to be admitted to the parlors and the courtesies of old-established and eminent families. Money doubtfully or dishonorably — not necessarily dishonestly — acquired will not aid in achieving recognition among men of perhaps not superior wealth, but of unsullied antecedents, and the poor but upright member of a respectable house may move in a circle closed, as by a Chinese wall, to the millionaire who has built his fortune in questionable ways. Again, descent from a statesman or judge, whose memory is held in reverence, will secure for the degenerate scion a degree of toleration denied to plebeian prodigals, and the lustre of the ancestor's fame may blind the eyes of

an indulgent public to the shortcomings of his heir. Even in America it is something—wealth aside—to inherit an honorable name. It amounts to an introduction and a start. The son of a venerated father begins life several rungs up from the foot of the ladder—the rungs that it is the hardest for the poor and obscure to climb. But, to get to the top, he must prove his own mettle.

Foreigners have had occasion to observe the exclusiveness of upper American society. The reason is plain. In England and in Germany the class to which an individual belongs is as evident as the color of his hair. Associate with whom he may, he is still a nobleman, or a gentleman, or one of the people. He cannot divest himself of his rank in life. He may rise higher; but can hardly sink lower. In America all are nominally equal; social gradations are not known to the constitution or to the laws; and the maintenance of dignity, real or assumed, requires care in the selection of intimates. Besides, as far as foreigners are concerned, well-to-do American families have been so frequently de-

ceived by pretentious adventurers, sometimes of noble connections, whose aim has been to get American heiresses to support them in lordly idleness, that duty to those who are nearest and dearest exacts caution on the part of the affluent in tendering hospitality to strangers.

THE NATIVE FARMER.

THOUGH the farming class is overshadowed by the manufacturing and commercial interests, it is still the conservative leaven of New England's social and political life, suspicious of change, and jealously attached to established authority and order. The native farmers are not without pride of ancestry, and their record of lineal descent from the original settlers is as clear and a good deal cleaner and longer than the rolls which trace back the foundation of some noble English houses to a monarch's capricious lust. Looked at from the standpoint of even Burke's Peerage, 250 years is a long distance in the past. Several of the proudest dukes in Great Britain—to say nothing of the lesser aristocracy—would have to delve in very low strata of society to discover who their progenitors were when the fugitive kinsman of Cromwell “called this place Providence, because of God's merciful Providence to

him in his distress," and when Coddington and his fellow-emigrants sought rest in the Isle of Peace. Yet the followers of Williams and the associates of Coddington are still represented by living land-owners, and not a few of them can say with truth that there has not been a blotted page in their history in the quarter of a thousand years. How many of England's nobility can say as much?

I have spoken of the farming class as the conservative leaven of New England political life. In several of the New England States the rural vote is still predominant, but in all it is gradually losing ground, owing to the growth of the cities, the removal of restrictions on the suffrage, which was originally confined to the free-holders, and the partial adjustment of representation to population. On the other hand, the conservative free-holding element is being re-enforced by the business men and manufacturers who are acquiring property, and who have an incentive to oppose upheaval under the name of reform. Many of the rich manufacturers are farmers' sons, Dick Whittingtons from the country towns, and they

have a fellow-feeling for the neighbors and the homes of their boyhood. Indeed, they frequently invest a share of their wealth in the purchase of the ancestral acres, and convert the gambrel-roofed cottage into an elegant summer retreat. Therefore, while farmers who live by farming have ceased to be privileged and supreme in public affairs, joined with the many who have become substantial in trade, manufactures, and finance, they are able to prevent the multitude who have nothing at stake from gaining control over the destiny of the commonwealth.

The most striking features in the character of the rural population of New England are individuality and self-reliance. These qualities have been inherited from ancestors who were compelled by circumstances to depend upon their own industry for a living, and their own vigilance and courage for defence, when the treacherous Pequot lurked in swamps and woods, and the father attended Sunday worship with a weapon by his side. The founders of these colonies were men who thought for themselves, or they would not have been exiles for the sake

of conscience. Their situation made them still more indifferent to the opinions and concerns of the world from which they were divided, while they stood aloof even from each other, except when common danger drove them to unite for mutual protection. Their offspring grew up amid stern and secluded surroundings, and the thoughts and habits of the parent became the second nature of the child. I have often imagined that in the firm, wary, and reserved expression on the Yankee farmer's face was photographed the struggle of his progenitors two centuries ago. This wariness and reserve does not, as a rule, amount to churlishness. The American, like the English cultivator, has felt the ameliorating influences of modern civilization, and while he retains his strong individuality, his intelligence prompts him to benefit by the opportunities denied to his forefathers.

Nevertheless, there are yet some families so gnarled and knotty and cornered that they seem to be walled in from the nineteenth century, and treat society with distrust, if not with hostility. They show their independence by receiving

every social approach with freezing repulsion, and deny to their daughters the associations for which they are fitted by respectable descent, by intellect, and also by education. The occasional consequence is that the daughter, yearning for some friend of her own age and the other sex, forbidden intercourse with young gentlemen who would perhaps gladly be her suitors, and frowned upon should she show the slightest inclination to encourage their visits, begins to find relief in the coarser company of the hired man, who may be a mere ignorant immigrant, or the cast-off son of a decent American household. Before she knows what she is about she has, perhaps innocently, gone so far that she is in the fellow's power, and is led or forced into a marriage unknown to her parents. A recent tragic event which aroused alike the horror and the pity of the public, was directly attributable to just such a course on the part of the parent, while not a few unhappy and degraded homes are examples of similar blind and cruel obstinacy. Families of this sort are, however, in a small and diminishing minority, although some of

them possess considerable property, which they cannot be said to enjoy.

The dwelling of the New England farmer is usually lacking in those tasteful accessories which add such a charm to the cottage homes of England and of France. Beyond the belt of suburban villas one seldom sees a carefully tended flower-garden, or an attractive vine. The yard, like the field, is open to the cattle, and, if there is a plot fenced in, it is devoted, not to roses and violets, but to onions or peas. The effect is dreary and uninviting, even though the enclosure may be clean, and the milk-cans scoured to brilliancy. Again we see in this disregard for the beautiful the effect of isolation upon the New England character, the result of hard grubbing for the bare necessities of existence. The primitive settlers needed every foot of the land which they laboriously subdued, for some productive use; they had neither time nor soil to spare for the culture of the beautiful; and their descendants have inherited the ancestral disposition to utilize everything, and the ancestral want of taste for the merely charming in nature. Yet there

are gratifying exceptions to the general rule, and sometimes a housewife may be met who takes pride and pleasure in her flower-beds. No doubt it was such a wife that the lonesome old farmer was speaking of one evening, in a group by a roadside tavern, as the writer passed along. "My wife loved flowers," he mournfully said, as his weary eyes seemed to look back into the past, "and I must go and plant some upon her grave."

The home life of the farmer has undergone essential changes within the past half century — changes consequent upon the strides taken in manufactures, and upon the development of the fertile acres of the West, and of the vegetable gardens of the South, and the immeasurably increased facilities for transportation, which place the products of the Bermuda plantation and of the California grain-field in perennial freshness and abundance at the New Englander's door. The farmer, however narrow and conservative in his view of the world beyond his fences, is compelled to be cosmopolitan as to his raiment and to his larder. Except in a few remote cot-

tages, the spinning wheel for wool and the "little wheel" for flax have been laid aside among the useless relics of a generation gone by; the old-fashioned tailor no longer journeys from house to house, making into suits the cloth raised and spun on the farm, and the traveling shoemaker who took each household in turn, toiling faithfully until all were shod, is likewise a being of the past. The farmer buys his attire ready-made at some shop in city or village, the flour for bread, the meal for bannocks and the maize for the horses and cattle are from western granaries—much of his flesh meat, even, is from the abattoirs of Chicago and the pork-houses of Cincinnati. Sheep-raising, once a profitable branch of agricultural industry, has been almost wholly abandoned, former pastures are covered with brush and trees, and ruined hussacs alone tell of the dense flocks which were sheltered within their walls. Farming is now subsidiary, in the main, to the production of milk, for which there is a ready market in more or less distant localities, the demand near home being usually equal to the supply. If comfort-

ably well off, the farmer has a piano, and however close in his personal expenditures, he does not begrudge his children the means for a liberal education. He may go about himself in indifferent, nay, neglected attire; but his rickety wagon or time-stained carryall conveys his daughter daily to a school or a high-priced seminary of learning.

But there is a phase of country life lower and darker than any at which I have hinted. It was not two hours' walk from the second city of New England that I rapped at the door of a cabin, whose bleak clapboards and ragged shingles showed scant regard by the occupants for outside appearances. The object of my call was to hire a wood-chopper, a man of mixed Indian and negro blood, who lived in the lonely place, and who was said to be an expert with the axe. A cheery invitation to step in was the reply to my inquiry, and I was soon seated amid surroundings seldom seen outside of rural New England. The floor was bare but clean; the furniture was scant; two or three chairs, a table without a cloth, and a stove of the simplest pat-

tern. A still young white woman, whose wan but not unattractive features wore a patient and shrinking expression, as if reconciled to her choice of a life-partner, but deprecating the visitor's silent criticism, busied herself in preparing the evening meal. Her husband, a lithe, stalwart fellow, whose high cheek-bones and lank coal-black hair betrayed his aboriginal ancestry, was playing a merry tune on the violin to the delight of a rather pretty little girl, with large, bright eyes, and ivory teeth, and round, russet cheeks; while a brown baby tumbled and laughed and goo-gooed at her pale mother's gown. With all her happiness there was visible a pensive shade in the face of the little girl, as if her childish mind had already begun to brood upon the stigma of her birth. But, though poor, it seemed to be a pleasant home, and the simple wants of the inmates were evidently supplied. Here in the forest they lived, secure from the sneers, if ignorant of the graces and luxuries of society. The owner of the land and the timber did not grudge or miss their fuel; while the father's arm, at seventy-five cents a cord, kept the meal-chest from running dry.

The cabin was a type of many to be seen in out-of-the-way places in New England, except that the wives are not often of pure Caucasian parentage. The fathers, like the one described, are usually of African and Indian descent, intermarriages between the two races having been very frequent. Their forefathers, on the African side, at least, were probably slaves, when slavery was a cherished local institution, and a bondman could not cross a ferry without a pass from his master or mistress. Having grown up before the public school system had arrived at its present usefulness, these men and women are almost, without exception, densely ignorant, and equally superstitious, though it is but just to add that their grade of morality is higher on the average than that of the low whites who are similarly situated, and who supply so many recruits to the State Prison and the State House of Correction.

Willful isolation, the lack of educational advantages, and the increasing poverty of the farming class, are the formative causes of the growth of social fungi in our agricultural towns. While the majority of the cultivators of the soil

keep up with the age, profit by its opportunities, and share in its enlightenment, here and there families remain stagnant and secluded, earning enough for the absolute needs of existence, but without energy or ambition to rise above foul and groveling associations. Some of them are able to scrape a support from their stony acres ; but the greater number live as tenants or squatters, and work out when they are starved to it, their wages soon disappearing in drunkenness and fines. Their end usually is in the jail, the almshouse, or a pauper's grave. These persons have undeniably a somewhat demoralizing influence on the communities in which they exist, for, as laborers — and they are often excellent workers — they are brought into contact with people of a superior standard. It would probably be easier to convert a savage, than to effect a reformation in the habits and minds of such families, for they are commonly obstinate in their ideas, and have the characteristic New England measure of their own equality to anybody and everybody. Their squalid cabins suit them ; they confine themselves to their own busi-

ness, and wish the rest of the world to do the same. And, indeed, the world, as a rule, leaves them alone in their ignorance and immorality ; only to stand aghast when some awful crime casts a lightning flash into the gloomy recesses of which we see so little from the traveled highway.

PRIVATE GRAVEYARDS.

An interesting monograph might be written on the private graveyards of Rhode Island. One meets them everywhere. Among the shade-trees surrounding a house on the busy street, in the orchard behind the farmer's barn, and again in the depth of the wood, a few rude, unchiseled headstones, nearly hidden by the tangled brush, reveal to the explorer the spot where sleep the forefathers of the plantation. I came across such a burying-ground not long ago. It was far from the traveled highway, far from the haunts of liv-

ing men, among trees and grapevines, and blueberry bushes. The depression in the soil indicated that the perishable remains had long ago crumbled to dust, while a large hole burrowed in the earth showed where a woodchuck had made its home among the bones of the forgotten dead. With reverent hand I cleared the leaves from about the primitive monuments, and sought for some word or letter that might tell who they were that lay beneath the silver birches, in the silent New England forest. But the stones, erect as when set by sorrowing friends perhaps two hundred years ago, bore neither trace nor mark. There were graves enough for a household, and likely a household was there. It may be a father who had fled from Old England to seek in the wilderness a place where he might worship God according to the dictates of his heart; a Pilgrim wife and mother, whose gentle love had mellowed and softened the harshness of frontier life, and sons and daughters, cut off before the growth of commerce had tempted the survivors to the town, or the reports of new and fertile territories had induced them to

abandon the rugged but not ungrateful paternal fields. With gentle step, so not to disturb the sacred stillness of the scene, I turned from the lonely graves, and I thought, as I walked, that these simple tombs in the bosom of nature well be-fitted those who had dared the dangers of wild New England for freedom from the empty forms of a mitred religion.

It seems strange now, when gazing from Prospect's height, we behold the beautiful parks, with monuments of glittering marble among the ever-green trees, and the scores of steeples flashing back the genial rays of an April sun, to reflect that over half a century had passed, after the settlement, before a spot of land was set apart for a public burial ground, that nearly a century elapsed before the first steeple rose above the "Towne street," and that more than one hundred years passed away before a lettered headstone was used to mark the resting-place of the departed. But, with the accretion of wealth to the living, more care was expended upon the dead, and enduring slabs of slate, with appropriate engravings, took the place of the uncouth fragments

of rock. With added riches the taste for display in headstones, as well as in social life, increased, and imported marble was occasionally used to designate the tombs of the prosperous descendants of the early and impoverished settlers. Not infrequently all three—the unlettered stone of the first hundred years, the slate of the latter half of the last century, and the polished and costly marble now so common in the great public cemeteries—may be seen in one small burying-ground, bearing mute testimony to the struggles and progress of the occupants.

But the day for private burying has gone by. That such is the case is recognized even by the oldest inhabitants, who mournfully and reluctantly are transferring the remains they cherish to inclosures which no vandal plow can invade, and are providing for their own interment by the purchase of lots in the corporate cemeteries.

SMALL FAMILIES.

FROM the twenty-eighth annual report upon the registration of births, marriages, and deaths in Rhode Island it appears that the number of births in 1880 was fifty-five less than in the preceding year, and less than in any year, with one exception, since 1873. As the population of the state has increased from 20,000 to 25,000 during this time, "there must have been," the author of the report remarks, "causes outside of natural causes to have so largely diminished the ratio of births to population." Another significant feature of the report is that the proportion of the second children of the mother, born in 1880, was not only smaller than in any one of the previous five years, but considerably smaller than the average of a period of thirteen years. When so respectable an authority gives it as a grave and deliberate opinion that the decrease of child-bearing must be owing to operations in conflict with nature, the writer may be justified

in calling attention to a subject so serious, not only in its present aspect, but in its influence on the future of the American people. It is a delicate subject, one that is usually avoided, and discussed only with hesitating admissions and bated breath, but all New Englanders feel and know what is going on ; they are conscious that, for one child of New England blood who is born into the ranks of humanity, ten ought to be born. They know that prevention of birth, and the destruction of immature infants, are the crying evils of the time. It is useless for learned physicians to write treatises to show that the race of English colonists in America is degenerating, and that the grand-daughters of matrons who brought forth, and reared, and nursed into vigorous manhood and womanhood children half-a-score in number, are physically incapable of following the ancestral example. The New Englanders of to-day are as well developed in every respect as their progenitors, and as well fitted to act the parts of fathers and of mothers. The drug clerks, who serve up preventive and abortive medicines, know this to be

a fact; so do the doctors who ply the detestable traffic, which always ruins and sometimes kills.

It is manifestly useless to utter any warning against a practice which the social sentiment of New England does not recognize as a crime, although the law condemns it as criminal. The women, and I may truthfully add, the men of New England, wish to avoid the burden of large families; indeed, to have a troop of children is regarded as Hibernian and vulgar, and the prolific mother, who would have been looked up to with reverence in Rome or in Israel, is more likely here to receive a side-glance, half of pity, half of contempt.

But while in one aspect the avoidance of a numerous family may be a sign of degeneracy from the primitive wholesomeness of early New England life, yet I am inclined to look upon it also as an indication of a more refined intellectuality and a clearer and more penetrating insight into the responsibilities of parentage, combined with a love of that ease which cannot be enjoyed in a household full of prattlers. The educated New Englander asks himself or herself

what the use is of bringing into the world beings liable to all the ills which beset the human kind, beings whose authors cannot insure for them either a happy or an honorable existence, and who may be a cause for ceaseless anxiety on the part of their parents. He or she may plausibly argue that, even after all the troubles of a careful training, the offspring may prove ungrateful, and fail to smooth the time-scarred brow, which had sweated to earn nourishment for their infancy. Indeed, there is no end to the dark forebodings of the future, which might throng the minds of the thoughtful husband or wife, and deter from assuming the highest function of divinity—that of creation—unguided by the omniscience which makes it impossible for divinity to err.

But, however well-grounded, as far as the individual is concerned, may be the selfish motives which prompt the avoidance of parental cares, the state cannot but be gravely injured by the failure of its most valuable class of citizens to multiply in their due proportion. The New England stock is the arterial blood of the commonwealth,

and its decay means a general weakening of the body politic. Foreign immigration is rushing in in tumultuous tide, and the American element which ought to receive and assimilate it is lessening in volume and diminishing in strength. The foreign element, consequently, is gradually but surely advancing toward the ascendant, and the homestead of the old family goes to the stranger, because there is no son to inherit it. The foreigners and their children propagate as nature directs, and at their present rate of increase, compared with the American part of the community, New England will, at no distant date, be controlled by a majority alien in character and largely in origin to the founders of the colonies.

The writer has no remedy to suggest. On the contrary, he is of the opinion that, as the avenues of life become more thronged, and the struggle for existence more exhausting and disheartening, the practice of preventing the birth of children will become more and more common. Legislation would grapple the problem in vain, for law cannot invade the sacred sphere of marital relations, or put a stop to habits which society

does not consider as a cause for ostracism, or even for a frown. Nor is it probable that any measure tending to encourage fruitfulness would receive popular indorsement, for it would not be in accord with the spirit of the age, and it would more immediately and certainly benefit the alien part of the community.

DIVORCE.

THE radical difference in regard to divorce between the greater number of American states, on the one hand, and European countries on the other, is that in Europe divorce is the luxurious privilege of the upper orders, and in America it is within reach of all. Here divorce is cheap ; there it is costly. In every divorce trial in Great Britain, which the writer has heard or read about, the parties belonged either to the nobility or the gentry, or to the wealthy plebeian class. Here the lowest and meanest, without a settled habitation or a name, do not, of course, think it necessary to ask for a legal validation of a change in their domestic condition ; but it is safe to say that the great majority of divorces are applied for by persons of moderate property, or perhaps very poor but of respectable situation or connection.

It seems hardly worth while to contend against the suggestion that a nation, or a people, who

have a liberal divorce system, must be more immoral than a nation whose courts are denied the authority to sever the matrimonial tie. For instance, France, where absolute divorce is unknown to the law, is rotten to the heart, if Zola's novels are as vivid as they are nauseating, and even Frenchmen who shudder at that author's delineations of French home-life, seem to confess in their shrinking that they recognize the hideous reflection. No such picture can be truthfully painted of New England social existence. We have plenty of licentiousness here, but it is known by no other name. The "*bon ami*" of the faithless wife is at least ashamed of his infamy, and the boundary which divides an avowedly sinful career from decent association is difficult to cross.

The most meritorious feature of the New England divorce system is the acknowledgment of the domestic equality of woman, and the aim to protect her against the cruelty so prevalent abroad, and so common in America also, among the class of the population whose religious prejudices deter them from seeking relief from marital mis-

ery before secular tribunals. The court records prove that a large majority of petitions for divorce are made by wives, while many of the causes set forth indicate that the applicants had been driven to the step as a final refuge from unendurable bondage. Among three hundred and forty-seven applications in Rhode Island, in 1880, two hundred and fifteen alleged neglect to provide the necessaries of life, seventy-six charged with extreme cruelty, seventy-three continued drunkenness, and one hundred and eighty-eight wilful desertion. These statistics show clearly and eloquently why the friends of equal rights for women are not among the clamorers for a Scriptural divorce law.

It would be insincere to pretend that the liberality of the divorce laws is not sometimes taken advantage of to obtain divorces where none ought to be granted, and when the only object of one or both of the petitioners is the gratification of a desire for a new affinity. Instances of such abuse are heard of occasionally, as when a well-to-do manufacturer paid his indifferent and complaisant wife ten thousand dollars to institute pro-

ceedings against him, in order that he might be at liberty to marry a pretty mill operative, who guarded her virtue jealously. The usual way in such cases is for the husband and wife to agree upon terms, and the latter to begin the suit, which is carried through without opposition, and then both parties are free. It is true that the statute prohibits such collusion in unequivocal language, but it is extremely difficult to prove collusion, and the public, by tacit consent, consider a divorce proceeding a private affair in which none but the principals have a right to interfere.

As a rule, however, the divorce system works benignly and beneficially, and in the interest of human happiness and harmony. The instances of abuse are exceptional, as far as I have been able to discern. The large majority of divorced persons had long previously been separated, and the decree of the court simply made them legally single as they were already single in fact. Desertion, an often-recurring cause of divorce, does not necessarily or probably imply marital misconduct on the part either of husband or of wife. The vast and ever-developing resources of the

country offer limitless opportunities and temptations to the Eastern man, slaving along for the support of his family, and maybe sinking every day deeper in the mire of poverty, to desert duty and responsibility, and begin life anew in a distant region of the West. Perhaps the fugitive may perish in his search for gold, and the abandoned wife never be informed of his death, but if she survives the shock of desertion, and has individual hopes and prospects, she is likely to prudently obtain a legal independence, in order to remove all doubt as to her position, and to prevent the recreant, should he return, from claiming the rights of a spouse. Drunkenness also is prominent among causes of divorce ; not because drinking habits are more common in New England than elsewhere (the contrary being the fact), but because, while the English or the Irish wife allows a drunken and brutalized partner in matrimony to beat and thrash her at will, contenting herself now and then with retaliating in kind, the American wife leaves her persistently intoxicated and useless husband, procures a divorce, and tries for better luck. It should be added that neg-

lect to provide the necessaries of life is not a sufficient cause for the granting of a divorce, unless the husband is proven to be of the ability to provide, and that this allegation is generally appended to strengthen the charge of desertion or of drunkenness. Of the divorced women whom the writer has observed, the former husbands of the greater number had run away to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Had the women in question been residents of England they would have remained widows without the dignity and liberty of widowhood. As it is, they were restored to maidenly singleness, and not a few of them have become wives again, and, to all appearances, happy and contented wives.

Some Christian ministers have engaged in a crusade against the re-marriage of persons divorced for other than Scriptural cause, and have given it to be understood that they will not unite such persons in wedlock; that they, officers of the State, as far as this particular duty is concerned, will not be bound by the laws of the State, but only by a narrow religious rule laid down by themselves. Perhaps this course may seem to

them to be right, but the general public take a different view of it. That a woman divorced from a cruel or drunken husband, or from one who, by long absence and persistent neglect, has forfeited all claim to her companionship and esteem, should be denied an opportunity to marry another, and a worthy man, and to start in life again, in the God-intended position of a wife and mother, is unreasonable, and no amount of argument will convince the calm and unprejudiced mind that compulsory celibacy would be for the individual benefit of the divorced person, or for the best interest of society. Marriage is the natural condition of human beings. It is true that individuals differ in temperament, and that some are cold and dispassionate, and could remain continent for a lifetime ; but ordinary men and women are not so constituted, and the passions that are denied a legitimate outlet will find a vent in vice.

It is upon the children of the legally-severed parents that divorce has a baneful and chilling effect. The offspring are nearly always abandoned by the husband to the care of the wife,

and their sensitive and receptive minds feel only too acutely their mother's loneliness and their own. I will never forget a scene I once witnessed in the Supreme Court of Rhode Island. A pale-faced and poorly but neatly clad woman walked out of the court-room, after the hearing of her petition for divorce, bearing in her arms a sleeping baby, and followed by two little girls, about four and six years old. The little girls were sobbing as if their hearts would burst. Young as they were, they knew that the solemn-faced judges were about to deprive them of a father—a worthless and dissipated father, perhaps, but still their father, who in his better days had bought candy for their stockings on Christmas eve, and dandled them on his knee to a nursery rhyme; in whose strong hand they had fondly rested their tiny fingers, proudly thinking of the day when their heads would be up to his shoulder. How blank the world must have seemed to those children, their mother's frail arm alone between them and the hospitality of the poor-house! It is not strange that the fresh young spirit, shriveled and bruised by the privation of paternal affection and

sustenance, loses its bounding buoyancy and grows furtive and morose, and that the subsequent career is poisoned by the cup of bitterness drained in the days of childhood. It would be well, therefore, that applications for divorce by persons who have incurred the responsibilities of parentage should not be readily granted, and that infants should not be hastily deprived of the guardianship which even a father's name sometimes affords. In this respect the law ought to be made more stringent, or the practice of the courts more discriminating and conscientious. At present the children are awarded like the chattels, and seemingly without any more consideration.

It may thus be seen that a liberal divorce system works a large amount of good, and not an insignificant amount of evil — good in permitting the severance of the tie that binds to a living corpse, in enabling the deserted wife to start in life anew, and in protecting woman against the cruelty or tyranny of the wretch who has forgotten his manhood and his troth ; evil in allowing the collusive separation of couples for whose divorce there is no adequate or justifying cause, and

in thus forwarding and abetting practices which in essence are polygamous, in affording opportunities for the clandestine obtaining of divorces without a fair notice to the defendants, and in blighting the lives of the children of parties divorced by depriving them of the advantages of filial relation. These evils ought to be remedied, if possible, but the remedies proposed and advocated, chiefly by ministers of religion, are, in the general view, worse than the evils themselves. A return to a Scriptural divorce system would be contrary to the enlightened and progressive spirit of the age. Indeed, in New York, where absolute divorce is granted for adultery alone, the legislature not long ago modified the provision that the guilty defendant in the divorce proceeding should not marry again during the life-time of the complainant, by providing that such defendant might re-marry five years after the divorce, upon evidence satisfactory to the court that he had behaved well meanwhile, and recently the highest tribunal in that state has rendered a decision practically nullifying the restriction altogether. This indulgence has been re-

ceived with satisfaction by the organs of public opinion in New York, although the Puritan element is powerful there, and the same legislature that relaxed the divorce law increased the penalty for taking the name of the Saviour in vain. The New York Scriptural divorce system, the model of that which the clergy would like to see established in every New England State, has fostered and promoted the most scandalous and criminal practices on the part of private detectives and others, hired to commit perjury, and sometimes to perpetrate physical outrages, in order that proof might be obtained to meet the requirements of the law; and the effect of the restriction upon re-marriage has been to bring up questions as to the legitimacy of children, to unsettle titles to property, and to brand with the stigma of bastardy sons and daughters who had never suspected that they had been born in other but honest wedlock. I have in memory a flagrant instance—that of a discarded but pensioned and contented wife of forty years before who was dragged from her senile

retirement by grasping relatives to be a figure-head in contesting the will of her former husband, who, when parted from her by the court's decree, was comparatively poor, but subsequently, with the aid of an energetic second wife, the mother of his children, accumulated a very valuable estate. The son of the departed, a dutiful and estimable young man, to whose industrious and intelligent co-operation had been due much of his father's success, learned for the first time in that court-room that his father had been married before the union to his mother, and the charge that he was illegitimate seemed to strike him to the heart. The suit was so manifestly mercenary and unprincipled that, although the first wife had, or appeared to have, a strong case in a legal point of view, the Surrogate (as the judge of probate is called in New York) stamped it out with a decision which did thorough justice, however at variance it may have been with leather-bound precedent. The experience of New York with Scriptural divorce is certainly not of a character to tempt New England to

adopt the advice of the pulpit, and the precept laid down by the Testament.*

The room for improvement, in my judgment, is not so much in the divorce law itself as in the hasty and indiscriminate forms of procedure under it—which encourage collusion and ignore the claims of helpless and innocent infants. I would suggest, as a proper method of restraint

* To the shameful trade in fraudulent divorces it is hardly pertinent to allude here. That business flourishes in New York and other States, where divorces are granted only for "Scriptural cause," and has grown to be a crying evil of the day. Depraved and unscrupulous lawyers thrive on the procuring of forged and fictitious decrees, alleged to have been issued in Utah, and other States and Territories of the Union, where the divorce laws are dangerously lax. In Utah, for instance, divorce is granted by the Mormon probate courts for incompatibility of temper, and it is not even requisite that the petitioner be a resident of the territory. The tribunals of several States have pronounced these divorces void, when decreed on the application of parties who are not actual residents of the Territory in which they were decreed, and several individuals have been sentenced to prison as bigamists for marrying again, under the impression, real or pretended, that the judgment of a Utah court had released them from their previous matrimonial obligations.

It is an interesting fact that in South Carolina the divorce question has been treated as a political issue. Before the State fell into the hands of the negroes through reconstruction, the South Carolina laws did not permit of divorce on any ground whatever. The negro legislature enacted a divorce law almost as liberal as that of Rhode Island. When the Democratic whites again came into power, the conservative press at once called for the repeal of the law, and the restoration of the old condition of affairs, and the law was, I understand, erased from the statute book.

upon collusion, and for the prevention of injustice to those who cannot plead for themselves, that the public prosecutor, or an assistant representing that officer, should be present at every hearing of a petition for divorce, with the authority to question witnesses, and, if he should deem it proper, to summon parties to testify, in order that the Court might be enabled to act upon full and trustworthy information. It is obvious that the Court must judge by the evidence before it. As things are now, that evidence—except in the very rare instances of contested divorce suits—is the testimony presented by persons anxious to be divorced and who may or may not be acting collusively. The Court may conceive an impression that a suit is collusive, but judges have no right to weigh impressions against sworn and uncontradicted evidence. The presence of an officer appearing in behalf of the state would aid the Court to obtain and to decide upon a satisfactory understanding of any doubtful or suspicious case, and would probably deter many from bringing suits for causes morally if not legally insufficient.

RELIGION IN NEW ENGLAND.

THE change that has taken place in the religious thought of New England, within fifty years, is strikingly evident in the material surroundings of Christian worship, as in the mollified interpretation of Christian doctrines. The teachings of Jesus Christ are still avowedly believed by the large majority of the community, but they have no longer the gloomy and terrible meaning which made the Pilgrim Fathers imagine themselves the chosen militia of a vindictive Deity, with a special direction to exterminate all who did not agree with their narrow view of His revelations. The Puritans are still Puritans in name; but their Christianity is of a type adapted to the sensitive and enlightened conscience of a humane and civilized century. Church organizations are maintained more with the object of carrying on charitable and temperance work, of cultivating the social virtues, and of bringing persons—espe-

cially the young — together in pleasant and amicable intercourse, than with the idea of inciting Christians to sackcloth and ashes by painting the horrors of hell, or depicting the joys of heaven. I have listened to a number of preachers, some of them among the most distinguished belonging to the several evangelical sects, and I have not heard one pretend to enunciate literally the dogma of eternal punishment. Even the Methodist clergymen, who are much more emotional, as a rule, than Baptists or Presbyterians, are silent about the gnashing of teeth and the lake of brimstone, and prefer to appeal either to the best sentiment of humanity — gratitude — by describing the love and the sufferings of the Saviour, or to the practical and selfish side, by proving from every-day circumstances that to be a Christian is the best policy, even as far as living on earth is concerned. The former argument is probably intended for the women, the latter for the men.

The clergy are not now the political monitors of the community, as when, one hundred years ago, the election sermon, preached in Boston, and printed in pamphlet form, was spelled by the

light of the pine-knot in the cabin on the Berkshire plantation, inspiring the rustic breast with holy zeal to deliver the Israel of the New World from the yoke of the English Sennacherib. The newspaper has taken the place of the pulpit as a political beacon and guide, and, as every denomination and congregation includes members of both the prominent national parties, it would be impossible for a clergyman to indulge in even a distant partisan allusion without offending some one of his hearers. The clergyman is free, like any other citizen, to indicate his preferences and express his opinions in regard to public affairs, but the judicious pastor is not prone to use that freedom indiscreetly.

But, although the preachers are no longer political leaders, there is, in the opinion of the writer, based upon what he has heard and read of the past, and observed of the present, a larger proportion of learned, talented, and eloquent men among the pastors who minister in the meeting-houses of New England to-day, than in any generation gone by, before or since the abolition of the Standing Order. One obvious

reason for this is that the clerical ranks no longer depend for recruits upon the colleges alone ; some of the most brilliant and effective pulpit orators are graduates from the mercantile desk and the printer's frame, and are acquainted by personal experience with the feelings and wants of the laymen whom they have felt called upon to guide. Again, those of the regularly educated clergy, who are alike capable and ambitious, are incited to intellectual effort by the knowledge that congregations worth preaching to are more fastidious and critical than in earlier days, and that eloquence goes further than orthodoxy. A preacher who cannot round his periods fluently, whose ideas are stale, and who neither thrills nor charms ; who cannot, in a word, fill the pews, the rent from which supplies his salary, had better seek some other occupation, if he wishes to succeed in life. It was not so in the time, still within the memory of living men, when the state could compel a reluctant parish to contribute to the support of an obnoxious minister, and when Baptists were imprisoned in Massachusetts jails for refusing their tithes to the Congregational treasury.

The clergy are still pre-eminently the moulders of education. The presidents and professors of leading universities are usually prominent in some evangelical sect, and this is probably owing to the fact that every seminary of higher knowledge is under the control of a branch of the Christian Church, whose influence is predominant in the faculty, and which regards the college as a filial institution, with traditions intertwined with its own. However skeptical or indifferent students may be to religion, they cannot fail to imbibe at least an esteem for the doctrines of the Saviour from the teachers who impart to them secular lessons. The impressions thus received by the plastic mind of youth are not likely to be ever wholly effaced. The man or the divinity we venerate at nineteen we instinctively bow to at forty.

The main and perhaps the best feature of church association is the opportunity offered for social and companionable intercourse. The festivals and other gatherings, and the escorts to and from them, are of course promotive of matrimonial engagements, while the religious glam-

our throws a salutary influence around each budding betrothal. In the choir, in the Sunday School class, and at the refreshment table, introductions are made and friendships formed, which frequently result in happy unions, and the auspices are certainly favorable for the future of the couples thus attracted to each other. If for this alone, the Christian Church would be a blessing to modern New England society. Church connection also undoubtedly holds to reformation many who, but for the feeling of self-respect and responsibility thus engendered, and the encouragement which they thus receive in adhering to good resolutions, would fall back into habits of dissipation or of crime. Any one who has witnessed the anxiety of wives, whose husbands have been rescued from worthlessness and vice, to induce them to go to meeting regularly, will readily understand the importance of this branch of church usefulness. I may add that religious attendance serves to soften the somewhat harsh individuality of the New England character, by almost compelling families, who would otherwise live in Asiatic exclusive-

ness, and sullen independence, to extend to each other at least an appearance of courteous recognition.

The beneficial influence of the Church in New England can be perhaps most vividly idealized by trying to imagine what New England would be without the Church — without the Sabbath bell and the Sabbath School, without the education of the little ones in the beautiful lessons of the Testament, without the bracing of the weak by the Sunday sermon and meeting-house intercourse, without the softening and neighborly effect of church-membership and association. A great deal is said about hypocrisy among professing Christians. There is, however, one redeeming thing even in hypocrisy — it is a tribute to the virtues whose mask it pretends to assume. In a depraved and reckless society hypocrisy would be needless, because both real and simulated virtue would be held in contempt. But it is apparent to an unprejudiced observer that the number of religious hypocrites is very much exaggerated. It does not follow that a man is a hypocrite because, from a broad and intelligent

measure of what he owes to himself and his children, he countenances and supports a Christian preacher without complying in all his conduct with the rules of Christian fellowship. It is not fair to call such a man a hypocrite, as long as his course of life is frank and ingenuous. Yet there are many thousands of such men in New England, and they are the favorite target for the scoffer, who iconoclastically delights in battering the fabric which he could not replace. As for the occasional and notorious revelations of guilt under the guise of holiness, it will be generally found, on analysis, that the criminals are individuals of weak character, who, falling into difficulties, had not the manhood to face innocent poverty, and sought in crime a temporary refuge from the storm that would have stripped them of all but honor. Exposure followed, as an almost inevitable result, and the religion of which they had been professors shared, as a matter of course, in the obloquy attending their downfall.

SPIRITUALISM.

THE extent of the influence of Spiritualism cannot be ascertained by merely counting the membership of Spiritualist meetings and associations. The avowed Spiritualists — those who confess and exhibit their creed and practices to the world — are but a small minority of the multitude who are more or less believers in the genuineness of ostensible spiritualistic phenomena. Numerous prominent and active members of Christian churches are frequent and credulous at the sittings of so-called mediums, and among the disciples of the latter are numbered not a few men and women of large wealth, of unimpeachable standing, and sometimes also of estimable literary acquirements. Indeed, Spiritualism finds but few disciples among the ignorant and the poor. The mass of the ignorant, especially of foreign birth and parentage, are religiously superstitious, and regard spiritualistic manifesta-

tions as partly diabolical and partly fraudulent, while money is the “open sesame” to the medium’s dark room, a circumstance which shuts the door to him who has not money to spare. Most of the Spiritualists are, therefore, native Americans, and persons of sufficient means and leisure for exploration in that domain, which to the skeptic is alike impalpable and invisible.

The pretended mediums are, almost without exception, women, unlearned, of some personal attractions, and adepts at sleight of hand. With the majority of them Spiritualism is a mere shield for prostitution. Others again are decorous in their private behavior, as far as the public are aware. Nearly every medium who holds sittings has a husband or male friend, who acts as agent and scene-shifter, and is presumed to overawe the incredulous. Dead Indians appear to have a monopoly of communication between the spirit-world and New England mortals; at least the modern witches of Spiritualism nearly all aver that their familiar sprites are the disembodied souls of sachems who lived in the long ago, and who appear to have made very slight progress

in the English language, since their transportation to the happy hunting-grounds. An Indian spirit is a very convenient oracle, for a shadowy aboriginal whose identity cannot be fixed, is secure from cross-examination as to his antecedents and his contemporaries, while the natural voice of the medium can easily be disguised in the gibberish supposed to be uttered by the celestialized red man. The ghostly revelations are nearly all of an abstract and indefinite character, but occasionally facts are mentioned, with startling definiteness. Every instance of the latter sort, is of course related far and wide, with addition and exaggeration, and more converts are drawn over to the ranks of Spiritualism. But, notwithstanding these occasional oracular successes, every medium who has specially attracted public attention has been proved to be a cheat and a trickster by evidence sufficient to convict of crime in a court of justice, before an intelligent jury. Nevertheless, even after exposure, they go on with their exhibitions, are patronized as numerously as ever before, and are condoled with by their fellows as martyrs to the cause.

Advanced Spiritualists, apart from their faith in Spiritualism, are commonly advanced, or rather lax, in their social and political ideas. Free-love, the assassination of rulers, and the unlimited issue of stamped paper as coin, are among the tenets cherished, and frequently promulgated to the world by Spiritualists of the progressive type; while even the milder believers in heavenly inspiration of the nineteenth century Pythoneses stand politically and socially on the extreme edge of radicalism. The conservative portion of the community is almost as a body opposed to Spiritualism, and incredulous in regard to its professed manifestations. The pulpit and the bench are virtually of one mind in condemning it, the former as irreligious, and the latter as irrational, and the Chief Justice of Rhode Island went so far, in a recent prominent will case, as to substantially express the opinion to a jury that implicit faith in Spiritualism was an insane delusion. This view, strong as it was, appeared to meet with general indorsement, although denounced by Spiritualists as unjust and unsusceptible of proof. But even Spiritualists would probably prefer to

have their mundane controversies decided by a judiciary not in the habit of resorting to mediums for enlightenment. In New York a judge of the highest tribunal, eminent for his learning and experience, became so enwrapped in Spiritualism, that he avowed that his decisions were inspired by communications from the unseen, and public sentiment compelled him to resign. I have not heard of any similar instance in New England.

But, while I have yet to see or to hear of anything but chicane and muddled platitudes in spiritualistic exhibitions and revelations, in my opinion Spiritualism may have a future before it of tremendous import to the human race. Spiritualism is the offspring of religion and of skepticism — of skeptical religion and of infidel yearnings. While religion was itself spiritualistic, while the angels and the demons, and the disembodied souls were to the Christian believer beings as real as the men and women of flesh and blood around him, there was no place for modern Spiritualism. But nineteenth century Christianity, in discarding the personal and ever-present and ever-felt realism of another existence,

in substituting for the good and bad beings who hovered over the rude couch of the early Puritan, and the pallet of the Roman monk, who, alike to Mather and Loyola, were creatures as distinct as themselves, a supernatural entity too misty and incomprehensible to be perceived by the mortal mind, or to be the object of human emotion, compelled the heart, sighing for consolation that society could not give—for some inspiration or token from those who had passed beyond—to seek a refuge in Spiritualism. The parent whom death has deprived of a darling child; the child whom inexorable fate has robbed of a cherished father or mother; the husband or wife, whose yoke of love has been broken by mortality—each longs for some tangible, some visible, some audible intercourse with the departed, for an assurance, distinct and direct, that, while the body moulders, the spirit lives, and feels an interest in the affairs and the dear ones of earth. This longing is unsatiated by the infinite devotion and promises of the Saviour, for the venerating and self-abnegating love which the pious Christian entertains toward Jesus is es-

sentially different from the human and instinctive chord which binds him to the wife of his bosom and the offspring of his loins. The latter cannot be gratified or displaced by the former, even after the wife or child has ceased to breathe. It is this longing which leads the mourner to have recourse to the medium, to join the mystic circle, first as a hesitating explorer, and later on as a credulous and impressionable votary. The motive that prompts this blind and trusting confidence is too sacred to be sneered at, however absurd to the cool and practical observer the seeming jugglery that entralls and deceives.

On the other hand, covert or avowed skeptics, who reject Scriptural revelation and the priesthood, are induced to venture into Spiritualism by its novelty, its mystery, and the possibility which it holds out of acquaintance at first hand with the laws and conditions of future life, if any there be. Numerous so-called infidels are Spiritualists ; indeed, the tendency of infidelity is toward that path, and the number of unbelievers whose creed is annihilation is as small as the idea is almost universally repugnant. Spiritualism is the only

asylum for the conscience that severs itself from Christian connections in their various forms, and whether Spiritualism will gradually supplant the old religions and become a grand archangelic faith, capable of sheltering mankind within the shadow of its wings, or whether it will prove to be nothing more than that which it now appears — a deceptive and alluring mirage — will be for future ages to ascertain.

THE END.

ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL REPUBLICS.

A

REVIEW OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS

AND OF THE

CAUSES OF THEIR DECLINE AND FALL.

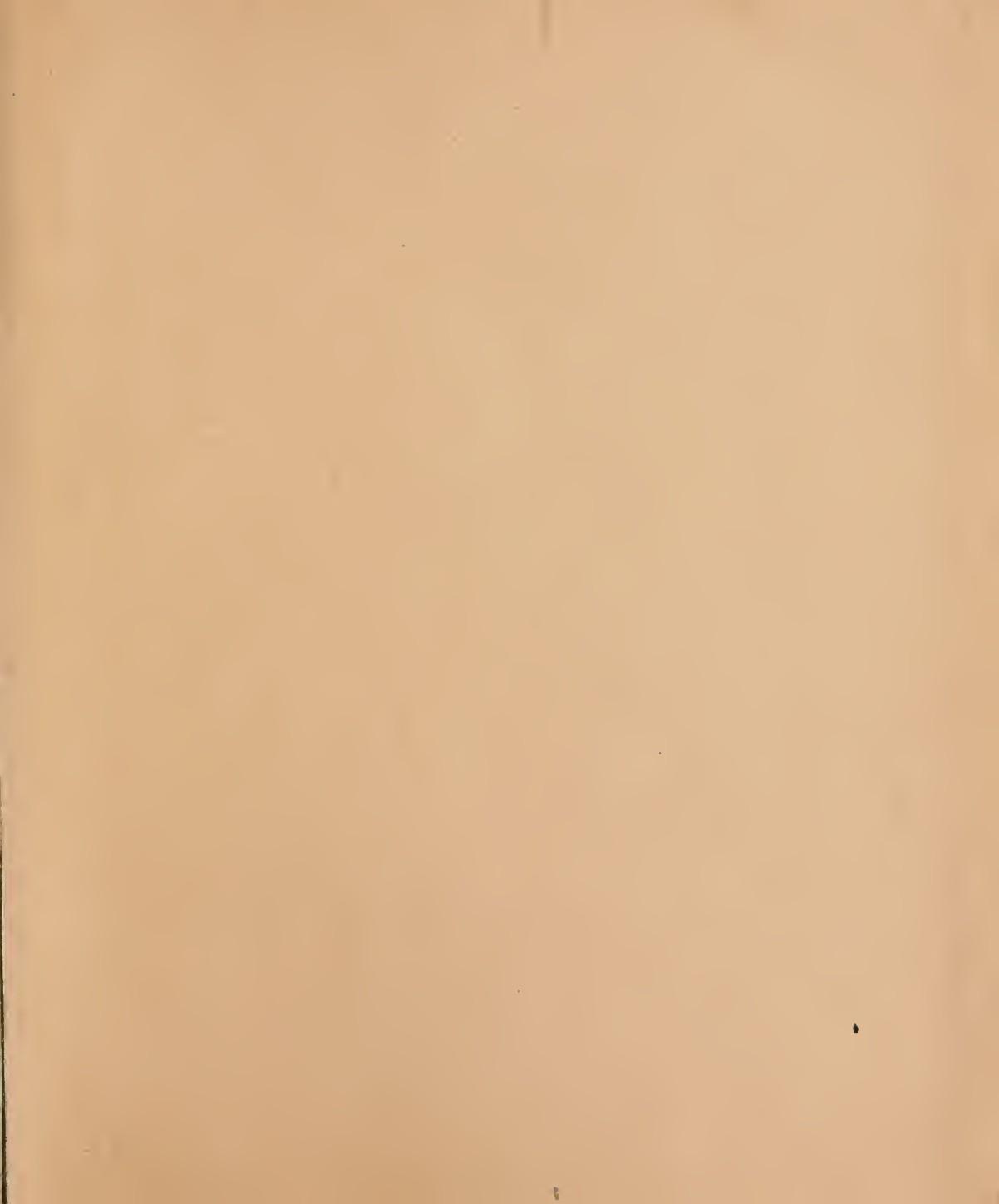
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1879.

"MR. MANN'S work on the history and fortunes of republics, ancient and mediæval, is a book of much more elaborate character, of higher pretensions, and, we think, of much greater merit, than American scholarship commonly produces. It can hardly pretend to rank with such histories as those for which the world is indebted to Mr. Prescott, Mr. Motley, and one or two others of their countrymen, whose nationality is almost forgotten in the universality of their reputation. Emanating from an English university, it might rank rather with second-rate, than with first-rate books of the class to which it belongs. But in American historical literature the second-class scarcely exists; between the classics of which we have spoken, and the multitude of works that hardly aspire above the rank of a college text-book, there is a vast and almost empty interval, and Mr. Mann's work must be placed much nearer to the higher than to the lower boundary of this unoccupied region. . . . The work before us has this especial value, that its method, at least, if not always its treatment, brings to the reader's mind the fact so easily forgotten by Greek and Latin historians, and beaten by the foot-steps of their successors down to the present day, that, till the age of Alexander, Athens and Sparta were but the dominant cantons of a race which, if most skillful in war and in arts among its rivals, was yet one of the lesser powers of its time; that the Greece of Pericles and Agesilaus was but one member of the family of nations, and by no means the foremost; and that, throughout the early history, even of Rome, the Hellenic States of the East and of Sicily, the maritime States of Italy, had constantly before their eyes a rival, which, though less aggressive than most of its neighbors, was nevertheless always a jealous neighbor, often a formidable enemy, and now and then a possible conqueror."—*Saturday Review, London, Eng.*, Sept. 25, 1880.

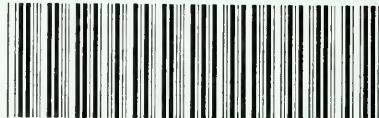








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